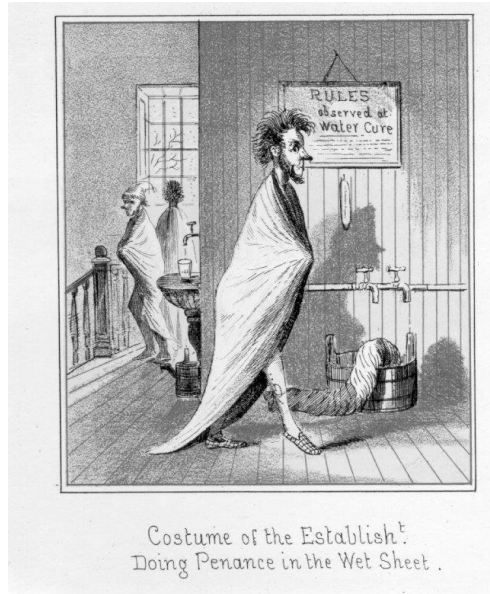
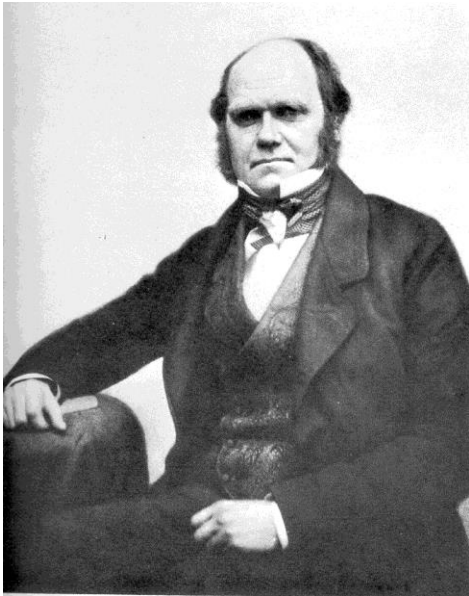


# An invitation to learn about Charles Darwin and his connection to Ilkley

## Press Release to local media May 2023 (website version)

Ilkley & District u3a are holding an open meeting on Saturday 20th May when the guest speaker will be Professor Mike Dixon, joint author of a book on Darwin in Ilkley.



All are invited to pop in to Clarke Foley near the main car park in the centre of town at 10:30 am on Saturday 20th May for a free hot drink.

Then listen to the fascinating story of how, when the *Origins of Species* was published on 24 November 1859, Charles Darwin, was near the end of a nine-week stay in the then remote Yorkshire village of Ilkley.

He had, of course, come for the 'water cure'- a regime of cold baths and wet sheets - and for relaxation. But he used his time in Ilkley to shore up support, through extensive correspondence, for the extraordinary theory that the Origin would put before the World: evolution by natural selection.

His water cure treatment was at Wells House. See this image from c. 1862.

Mike Dixon has lived in Ilkley since 1970 and after retiring as Professor of Gastrointestinal Pathology at the

University of Leeds, he has become well known locally for his series of books and lectures on local history. Like so many other members of u3a, he has used his time in retirement to further develop his interest in a topic.

Mike is happy to embrace the motto of u3a which is 'Learn, Laugh, and Live'. So if you have time to spare and an interest to pursue, u3a might be just what you need. An opportunity to meet like-minded folk with shared interests. In Ilkley there are over 100 interest groups meeting regularly and more than 1,800 members. So there is bound to be common ground to be found with others living locally.

Ask about joining u3a when coming to the lecture or just search the internet for Ilkley & District u3a.



## How Darwin's visit is commemorated in Ilkley today.

### Darwin Gardens

The former West View Park on Wells Road, was revived and restored as a Millennium Green and renamed Darwin Gardens in memory of the visit and officially opened on 24th June 2000. Today the gardens are managed by Ilkley Town Council.

A key feature of the gardens is the unique Millennium Green Maze. The monument at the start of the maze suggests early mankind's ideas about the world, drawing on symbols from ancient rock-carvings found upon Ilkley Moor. The monument at the end of the maze has an archaic cross commemorating the Christian Millennium.



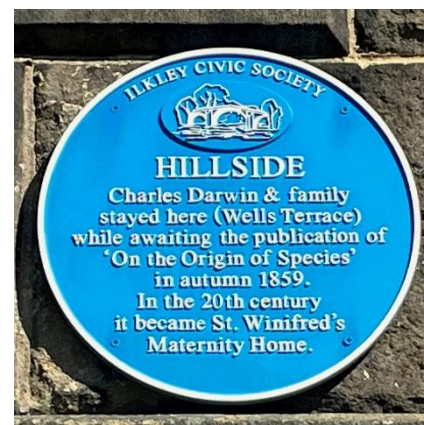
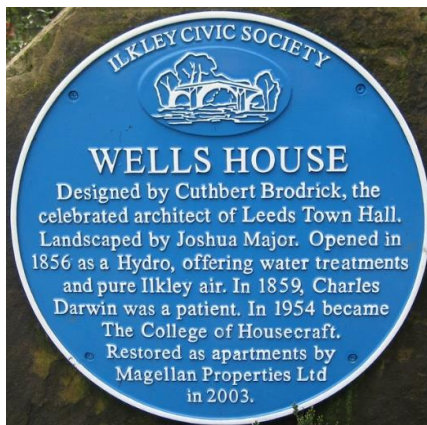
Darwin Gardens Maze



The entrance gates to Darwin Gardens

### Ilkley Civic Society Blue Plaques

The Darwin family stayed at Hillside on Wells Terrace and treatment was in nearby Wells House. Both buildings are now converted into residential flats but both proudly display their blue plaque marking their association with Charles Darwin.



Hillside today



Hillside (Wells Terrace). C. 1895